

The SAWEN Bulletin

South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network's quarterly newsletter on wildlife trade and crime related issues in South Asia

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NOTE: This newsletter needs your support. Please contribute wildlife crime/seizure reports or any other significant news report pertaining to wildlife trade from your country. You can write to sawen.secretariat@gmail.com or dchhabra@wwfindia.net



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From the Desk

Dear Readers

SAWEN Secretariat wishes everyone a very Happy New Year! **In this issue of the SAWEN Bulletin, we are pleased to announce that Nepal has achieved 100% success in combating Rhino poaching in 2011.**

The year 2011 is being commemorated as a landmark one for conservation in Nepal as not a single Rhino was killed in the country during the year. This is an important achievement at a time when there is a worldwide threat from illegal trade. Nepal's efforts will hopefully inspire fellow SAWEN member countries in the fight to stop wildlife crime.

To mark this achievement, the Government of Nepal, WWF and various conservation organizations celebrated Zero Poaching Year amidst a special program organized on 7 January 2012 at Chitwan National Park in Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape. The program was organized to felicitate the key institutions whose unrelenting efforts in conservation helped bring about this success.

Establishment of SAWEN and other institutional structures; wildlife crime control bureaus from central to district level and also increased awareness and sensitization of local communities, all helped curb illegal wildlife trade and poaching activities in Nepal.

In this memorable moment, we would like to share our happiness and express our sincere gratitude for your kind support for this success which we believe will be an exemplary learning experience for all SAWEN member countries.

Happy Reading!
Krishna Prasad Acharya
Chief Enforcement Coordinator



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SAWEN UPDATES

Fifth India & Nepal Transboundary Consultative Meeting on Biodiversity Conservation held in Nepal

The fifth India and Nepal Transboundary Consultative Meeting on Biodiversity Conservation was held on 21-22 October 2011 in Pokhara, Nepal. Mr Krishna Prasad Acharya, Chief Enforcement Officer, SAWEN participated in this two day meeting where delegates from both India and Nepal deliberated on various transboundary issues pertaining to biodiversity conservation across their shared borders. The meeting was also attended TRAFFIC and WWF-Nepal.

The key issues highlighted included illegal trade in high value forest products across borders, maintenance of corridors and connectivity, transborder cooperation and wildlife trade, landscape level biodiversity conservation strategy, joint management planning, capacity building and Indo-Nepal collaboration on biodiversity conservation.

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The participants jointly agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal should be formalized as soon as possible, with due consultation of the parties. They also suggested that there should be regular transboundary meetings and information sharing both at the central and field levels. Exchange between both the countries of officials with expertise and relevant knowledge needed facilitation. Provisions of CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) on issues of mutual concern such as smuggling of Red Sanders across borders and other CITES protected species needed to be effectively implemented. **The participants also strongly felt that the MOU must help facilitate the functioning of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN).**

China, India and Nepal agree to strengthen cooperation for curbing wildlife trafficking

A two-day meeting between China, Nepal and India was held on 12-13 October 2011 in Chengdu, capital of China's Sichuan Province, to collaborate action for stopping wildlife trafficking. Specific issues related to optimizing co-operation to prevent smuggling of wildlife such as Tiger and other Asian big cats, Red Sanders, otter skins, Shahtoosh, pangolin and several species of endangered medicinal plants were discussed in detail by the delegates of the three countries.

This important workshop was hosted by China's CITES Management Authority and was the second workshop on CITES Implementation and Enforcement with China, India and Nepal addressing common concerns for the three countries, including their commitments to the Global Tiger Recovery Program. TRAFFIC and WWF provided technical and financial support for holding the trilateral meeting.

In addition to this trilateral dialogue, the meeting also built upon existing bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between China and India, and China and Nepal. **China expressed its intention to engage productively with the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), the Secretariat of which is hosted by the Government of Nepal.**

"Establishing functional exchange of information will enable more effective law enforcement action between the three countries, and between China and SAWEN," said James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Director for Asia-Pacific.

Controlling Illegal Wildlife Trade in Pakistan

On 23-24 November 2011, 60 scientists and key officials representing Pakistan's Customs and Wildlife and Forest Department participated in a training workshop titled "Controlling Illegal Wildlife Trade". The workshop was held at Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH), Garden Avenue, Shakarparian, Islamabad and aimed to highlight the issues of illegal trade in wildlife, its parts and derivatives that is threatening Pakistan's unique biodiversity and habitats.

The training was jointly conducted by the experts from Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH) and WWF, Pakistan Wetlands Programme with technical inputs from TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network.

Illegal wildlife trade is not only causing huge loss of revenue to the national exchequer but also disturbing the ecosystem in the country leading to climatic change, various deadly diseases and socio-economic problems, said Chairman of Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Dr. Manzoor Soomro, who was also the Chief Guest at the workshop.

Mr Syed Mahmood Nasir, Inspector General Forests, said environmental crime has been an increasing concern of the international community and governments. Customs plays a central role to control international trade in environmentally sensitive goods regulated by the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and also help in eradicating their illegal trafficking.

Mr. Khalid Mahmood, President of WWF-Pakistan, said that WWF-Pakistan seeks and activates solutions to the problems created by illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. Our aim is to encourage sustainability by providing decision-makers, traders and others involved in wildlife trade reliable information about the environmental harm irresponsible trade can cause, and present guidance on how to counteract it.

Dr Masood Arshad from WWF-Pakistan and Dr M. Rafiq, Director Zoological Sciences Division, PMNH emphasized the need to increase awareness on laws related to wildlife and its illegal trade.

Read more at http://pakistanwetlands.org/Controlling_illegal_wildlife_trade_training.php

New staff at the SAWEN Secretariat

Ms Meeta Acharya joined the SAWEN Secretariat as the new Environment Associate on 15 August 2011. Her key role is to assist the CEC of SAWEN in carrying out day to day operations of the SAWEN Secretariat. She will also assist in coordinating between the various governmental and non governmental agencies on SAWEN related matters. Meeta has qualified in M.Sc. in Environmental Science. Before joining the SAWEN Secretariat, she worked as a Program Coordinator for HIMAWANTI, Nepal. Her position at the SAWEN Secretariat is jointly supported by TRAFFIC and WWF-Nepal.



NEWS FROM CITES*

www.cites.org

* CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

WAZA signs a cooperation agreement with CITES in Geneva

The Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Executive Director of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 December 2011, to facilitate access to expertise for the care of confiscated live animals, and with provision for training and raising public awareness in the implementation of CITES, as part of the UN International Decade of Biodiversity.

The main purpose of the collaboration is to facilitate the use of expertise available in the WAZA network to assist CITES Parties in implementing the Convention, and to support the activities of the CITES Secretariat for the benefit the conservation and sustainable use of species of wild fauna and flora. Cooperation between CITES and WAZA will also help guarantee the safe transport of wild animals between countries, whether it be for commercial trade, breeding, research or conservation purposes.

Read more at http://cites.org/eng/news/press/2011/20111220_cites_waza.php

NEWS FROM OTHER RELATED AGENCIES

INTERPOL leads crackdown on illegal wildlife markets in Asia

International wildlife crime networks in Asia have been dealt a blow after a recent operation coordinated by INTERPOL against the illegal trade in endangered species resulted in raids, arrests and investigations across the region. Supported by INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme, 'Operation Stocktake' (1-12 December) saw enforcement agencies from India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand inspect markets, restaurants and shops to identify those selling and trading endangered wildlife alongside legal products, including the sale of wildlife meat for human consumption.

India, the only SAWEN country which participated in 'Operation Stocktake', worked through its Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to carry out searches in 37 shops, arresting 10 suspects who now face criminal proceedings for trading in items such as ivory and Leopard claws. A number of birds were recovered as evidence along with marine animals such as sea-cucumbers and shells.

Similarly, enforcement officers from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand coordinated the operations in their countries. They recovered several wildlife products and derivatives and carried out arrests. All four countries involved in Operation Stocktake uncovered offences of transnational crime and are working with INTERPOL to pursue further international leads. Read more at <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News-media-releases/2011/N20111219>

INTERPOL launches Project Predator to save wild Tigers from extinction

'Project Predator', an initiative to protect and save the world's last surviving wild Tigers was unveiled on 2 November 2011, at the 80th INTERPOL General Assembly, a gathering of global law enforcement officials from the organization's 190 member countries.

Created by INTERPOL, 'Project Predator' unifies the efforts of police, customs and wildlife officials in the 13 countries of Asia where wild Tigers can still be found including four SAWEN member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. The 'Project Predator' initiative will provide capacity building to law enforcement agencies to combat Tiger crimes, strengthening their ability to work with wildlife officials using advanced, intelligence-led methods of investigation. In addition, the initiative will encourage countries to establish and resource National Tiger Crime Task Forces.

The programme is expected to move quickly into an operational phase with a meeting of senior police and Customs officials from Tiger range countries scheduled to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 13 and 14 February, 2012, to create and implement a plan of action. Read more at <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News-media-releases/2011/PR092>

INTERPOL's 23rd Meeting of the Wildlife Crime Working Group postponed

INTERPOL's 23rd Meeting of the Wildlife Crime Working Group that was to be held on 14-18 November 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand was postponed. The meeting will now be held from 13-17 February in Bangkok, Thailand. The postponement was due to the flooding in the host country during that period. For more information, please visit <http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Conferences-and-meetings>

REPORTS FROM SOUTH ASIA ON WILDLIFE TRADE ISSUES



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AFGHANISTAN

No news reported for this period

BANGLADESH

One lakh turtles sacrificed in ritual slaughter to celebrate Hindu festival; 27 October 2011 (MailOnline)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2054278/100-000-turtles-sacrificed-ritual-slaughter-celebrate-Hindu-festival.html#ixzz1hp7hm8JO>

Police arrested a poacher with the skin of a Tiger from Mothbaria bus stand in Mothbaria upazila of Pirojpur district; 8 December 2011 (The Daily Star)

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?id=213330>

BHUTAN

No news reported for this period

INDIA

Leopard skin seized in Bengal; 10 October 2011 (The Times of India)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata-/Leopard-skin-seized-from-BT-Road-shop/articleshow/10308846.cms>

Tiger skin recovered in Andhra Pradesh; 17 October 2011 (Hindu)

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/article2550083.ece>

Red Sanders weighing 13.5 tonnes seized by DRI which was being smuggled from the International Container Transshipment Terminal, Vallarpadam; 21 October 2011 (Hindu)

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/article2576576.ece>

Venom and rare snakes seized in New Delhi; 27 October 2011 (Times of India)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Rare-snakes-rescued-in-central-North-Delhi/articleshow/10513954.cms>

Leopard skin confiscated in Uttar Pradesh; 31 October 2011 (Times of India)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/Aliganj-police-nabs-two-persons-with-leopard-skin/articleshow/10575013.cms>

Three held for illegal trade in snakes in Delhi; 9 November 2011 (Times of India)

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-11-10/delhi/30381783_1_red-sand-boa-snakes-black-magic-wild-life-protection-act

INDIA

Poachers arrested with Leopard skin in Simlipal National Park; 11 November 2011 (IBNlive)

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/six-poachers-arrested-in-simlipal/201735-60-117.html>

Antlers weighing 560 kg seized in Chennai; 21 November 2011 (Times of India)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/Huge-haul-of-deer-antlers-at-Central-railway-station/articleshow/10823435.cms>

Rare birds seized in Bengal; 3 December 2011 (Hindu)

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2684892.ece>

Two arrested in Bangalore for smuggling Sea Cucumbers; 13 December 2011 (Deccan Herald)

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/211870/2-sri-lankans-held-bia.html>

Thirty kilogrammes of Seahorses seized in Tamil Nadu; 14 December 2011 (IBNlive)

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/30-kg-of-smuggled-sea-horse-seized/930748.html>

MALDIVES

No news reported for this period

NEPAL

Police arrested one person with Tiger skin and bones from Krishnapur-5 in Kanchanpur district; 21 August 2011 (The Kathmandu Post)

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2011/08/22/nation/newsdigest/225456.html>

Police team deployed at the temporary customs check post in Andheri, Sindhupalchowk seized 151 kg of Red Sanders that was being smuggled to Khasa, Tibet; 19 September 2011 (The Himalayan Times)

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Red+sandalwood+seized&NewsID=303351>

Six people arrested with pangolin scales and drugs in Makwanpur district; 17 September 2011 (Annapurna Post, 18 September 2011)

Four arrested with Tiger bones at a hotel in Nijgadh, Bara on 24 October 2011 (Annapurna Post, 25 October 2011)

NEPAL

Wildlife criminals involved with poaching and smuggling of Rhino horns arrested at Chitwan National Park, 25 October 2011 (WWF-Nepal)

http://www.wwfnepal.org/media_information/news/

Police arrest four for selling skins and bones of Tigers from Nijgadh in Bara district; 26 December 2011 (Tour Travel Nepal)

<http://www.tourtravelnepal.com/2011/10/cops-arrest-four-for-carrying-tiger-bones/>

Three persons arrested with rhino horn weighing 850 gm from Dhangadi; 28 November 2011 (nagriknews)

<http://www.nagriknews.com/society/nation/33610-2011-11-27-08-59-13.html>

PAKISTAN

Customs Authority seize 82 falcons at the Karachi airport that were being taken out of the country without proper documentation; 14 November 2011 (DAWN)

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/11/16/over-80-falcons-of-qatari-diplomat-detained.html>

Hit by staff crisis, wildlife dept unable to check falcon trade; 17 October 2011 (DAWN)

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/10/17/hit-by-staff-crisis-wildlife-dept-unable-to-check-falcon-trade.html>

SRI LANKA

No news reported for this period

Events and Announcements

- Deadline for submission to the CITES Secretariat documents for consideration at the 26th meeting of the Animals Committee : 15 January 2012
- Deadline for submission to the CITES Secretariat documents for consideration at the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee: 22 January 2012
- Twenty-sixth meeting of the Animals Committee to be held in Geneva (Switzerland): 15-20 March 2012
- First International Chiefs of Environmental Compliance and Enforcements Summit organized by INTERPOL and UNEP in Lyon, France: 27-29 March 2012